

Appl. No. 10/656,463  
Amdt. dated April 9, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of January 29, 2004

**REMARKS**

Applicants are filing this response to answer the outstanding Office Action. Applicants have used the revised amendment format as best understood by their attorney. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the instant application. Entry of the above amendments and following comments is respectfully requested before such reconsideration.

Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sorenson (6,291,986). Examiner refers to Sorenson Fig. 2, col. 2, lines 39-45 and col 4, lines 5-10 and 45-50 as anticipating applicants' invention. Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's anticipation rejection and respectfully traverses based upon the following reasoning.

Initially, applicants would like to reiterate that their invention is directed to a removable electrical conduit guide comprised of a hollow tube removably positioned within a junction box interior. The purpose of applicants' guide is to direct wire through a junction box interior having knockout openings which are interconnected to a plurality of hollow conduits external to said junction box. Applicants' invention is not intended for permanent

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installation, but is used only for guiding wires through a junction box during installation of an electrical system.

Applicants' guide is an installation accessory for a standard electrical box. Applicants' guide is installed at the same time a electrical system's conduits and boxes are installed to aid in the installation and "pulling" of wires through the electrical system. After installation of the electrical system wires, applicants' guide is removed. Applicants have made several amendments to claim 1 to more clearly state their invention.

Sorenson provides an insert for current measurement of circuits within an electrical enclosure such as a panelboard or cabinet. The Sorenson apparatus is permanently installed. As may be best understood from Sorenson Figs. 2 and 7, the insert (150) is not a guide for directing wire (116a) through a junction box but is a conduit apparatus (150) having one or more conduits (152) extending through the apparatus which are accessible from an apparatus open side. Each conduit is tubular, but is not removable but rather is fixedly attached to the conduit apparatus (150). The conduits (152) are not separately and removably installed. Each Sorenson conduit is accessible through the open side and each conduit is adapted to receive a single electrical conductor. See Sorenson, col. 2, lines 39-45. The conduit

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apparatus (150) is inserted into a load center enclosure (600) as a unit. The conduit apparatus (150) provides a conduit enclosure having one or more surfaces which isolate the conduit from the interior of the box (600). The open side provides access for attaching a hook-on ammeter to the conduit and measuring the current with the ammeter. See Sorenson, col. 2, lines 55-59. Since applicants' wire installation guide is not a fixed, permanently attached conduit apparatus for attaching an ammeter, applicants respectfully argue that Sorenson cannot anticipate applicants' removable installation wire guide.

Examiner has rejected claims 2-7 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sorenson (6,291,986) in view of Snyder (3,573,344). Examiner rejected applicants' claim 2 essentially because Snyder teaches the use of two cylindrical rings (22) attached about the tube side wall exterior surface (Fig. 1). Examiner rejected applicants' claim 3 essentially because the attached rings are formed in said side wall exterior surface. (Snyder Fig. 1). Examiner rejected applicants' claim 4 essentially as an obvious matter of design choice. Examiner rejected applicants' claims 5-7 as being obvious over Sorenson.

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Applicants acknowledge Examiner's obviousness rejections and respectfully traverse. Applicants incorporate the above arguments and further submit the following. Snyder discloses a telescopically adjustable junction box, not a guide tube. Snyder does not adapt to a junction box, but is its own junction box. As may be best seen in Snyder Figs. 6 and 7, the interior of the Snyder junction box is empty; there is no wire guide. Snyder's junction box shows external conduits (20) and (40) connected to the junction box and attached to the junction box by conventional connectors (22). See, also, Snyder col. 2, lines 12-18.

Applicants' wire installation guide has two rings formed about its wire guide tube within the junction box interior to prevent the wire guide from being pulled out during the wire pulling operation of an electrical system installation. Applicants' tube side wall is completely different from the Snyder junction box side wall exterior surfaces (14) and (34). Applicants' invention would be installed within the interior of a typical junction box, or even Snyder's junction box interior (46). Applicants' rings prevent their wire guide tube from being pulled out of the junction interior through a knockout opening.

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The purpose and function of the Snyder connectors (22) are completely different. Their purpose is to attach and hold external conduits to the junction box. Applicants have amended their claims 2 and 3 to more fully distinguish applicants' invention from the Snyder patent.

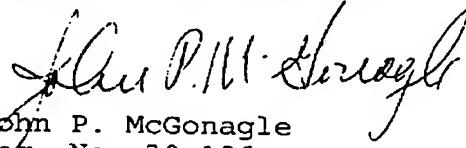
Applicants' wire installation guide has scored lines formed therein to aid in the removal of the guide after wire installation. The scored lines provide a convenient way to break and remove the guide after wire installation. As stated above, the Sorenson individual conduits (152) are fixedly installed within the insert (150). Scored lines in the Sorenson conduits (152) would be meaningless, since the Sorenson conduits (152) are not removable from the insert (150). Since applicants' wire installation guide may also be made from nonconductive material, the guide is usable for power lines as well as communications lines.

By having smaller and tapered ends, applicants' wire installation guide may be fitted into junction boxes with varying knockout hole sizes. Therefore, one wire guide would serve varying applications and junction box sizes.

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Applicants believe that the Examiner will see from a reading of claims 1 through 7, as amended, that the distinguishing features of applicants' invention are all present in the claims. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

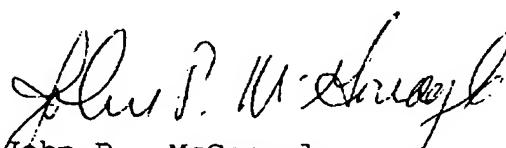
  
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April 9, 2004

  
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